

San José Unified School District
855 Lenzen Avenue, San José, CA 95126
District English Learners Advisory Committee (DELAC) Meeting
March 21, 2011

MINUTES

- I. Call to Order:** Ms. Mara Herrera called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.
- II. Welcome and Introductions:** Ms. Herrera welcomed everyone and introduced District staff and special guests.
Interpretation services provided by Ms. Miriam King and Ms. Claudia Aguilera.
- III. Attendance:** Ms. Ramírez reminded everyone to sign the attendance roster.

Schools represented:

Allen at Steinbeck, Anne Darling, Almaden, Bachrodt, Canoas, Carson, Empire Gardens, Galarza/ Hammer, Gardner, Grant, Graystone, Hacienda, Horace Mann, Los Alamitos, Lowell, Olinder, Reed, River Glen, Simonds, Schallenberger, Terrell, Trace, Washington, Williams, Bret Harte, Hoover, Muir, Willow Glen MS, Broadway, Pioneer, Leland, and Willow Glen HS.

Schools not represented:

Booksin, Willow Glen Elem., Burnett, Castellero, Gunderson, Lincoln, and San José High.

- IV. Approval of the Agenda:**
The agenda was reviewed and amended. An announcement regarding the budget was added under Section X. Mrs. Laura Alonzo made a motion to approve the agenda as amended and Mr. Gabino Martínez seconded. All were in favor and the agenda was approved.
- V. Approval of Minutes:**
The minutes from February 14, 2011 were reviewed. Ms. Rosalba Calderón made a motion to approve them and Ms. Danelia Gutiérrez seconded. All were in favor and the minutes were approved as presented.
- VI. Correspondence:**
Ms. María Elena Ramírez announced that several letters were returned this month and reminded members to keep their contact information updated in order to receive their correspondence on time.
- VII. Committee Reports:**
Voluntary Integration Plan (VIP) Committee by Mr. Funk
Mr. Funk reported that the VIP provided information on program options for ELs at the elementary and secondary levels. The main focus of the discussion was around state and District budgets. He requested the VIP members' input on their priorities related to Tier III TIIG Expenditure Plan and the Comprehensive Plan for School Support (ComPSS). At the next meeting, Mr. Funk will present the budget information to the DELAC Committee with the purpose of getting their input on their own priorities. The Office will send the budget PowerPoint presentation so parents have an opportunity to review the content before attending the next meeting.

Parent Brown Bag Meeting:

Ms. Nancy Valdés announced the next meeting on March 24, 2011. No report was provided.

- VIII. Old Business**
- A. Academic Interventions by Ms. Mara Herrera**
Ms. Herrera referred to last month's DELAC minutes regarding academic interventions offered at the different schools. The list of academic interventions was provided to parents. Ms. Herrera reviewed the list with parents and checked for understanding. She recommended that parents review the programs offered at their schools and contact their principals if they have questions.
- IX. New Business:**
- A. English Learner Programs and Teacher Authorization by Rosanna Mucetti**
Ms. Mucetti provided an overview of the different programs offered at the elementary level. The three programs offered are the Academic Language Acquisition (ALA), the Two-Way Bilingual Immersion (TWBI) and the Structured English Immersion (SEI).

Ms. Mucetti defined the ALA Program and explained how it is implemented in the classroom. She shared that all teachers must have a special credential in order to provide instruction to English Learners. The instruction is delivered in two languages and all information sent home must be in two languages.

Ms. Mucetti showed the ALA Program Design and defined the TWBI program. At this time, students who are in the TWBI have the option to continue in the program once they transfer to middle school and high school.

Questions

A parent asked if a school could have more than one program.

Ms. Mucetti answered that if a school is a TWBI school, that school cannot have a different program. At this time there are some ALA schools that have begun a TWBI Program, so they are offering both programs. Eventually, those schools would become TWBI only and the ALA Program will no longer be offered there.

A parent asked if the ALA program was going to be eliminated.

Ms. Albarrán said that only the schools that qualify for the program could offer it.

A parent asked if a principal could change programs without notifying the parents. She mentioned that the Bilingual Program was replaced by an English Only program and parents were never notified.

Ms. Albarrán explained that in order to offer a Bilingual Program, the school must receive at least 20 signed parental waivers. If the school doesn't receive enough waivers and is not able to offer a Bilingual Program, parents are given the option to transfer their children to a school that offers it.

A parent asked why it is so hard to be accepted to the TWBI (for example, at River Glen School).

Ms. Mucetti and Ms. Albarrán explained that River Glen is a Magnet School and it is an option for all students in the District who are interested in the program. There is a lot of interest in this program, so the wait list is long.

Ms. Mucetti continued her presentation explaining in detail how the SEI Program is implemented in the classroom. The Programs for English Learners at the secondary level were explained in detail.

There were several individual questions from parents regarding student reclassification, which were answered by Ms. Mucetti.

Ms. Albarrán explained the process and criteria for reclassification briefly.

Ms. Herrera asked Ms. Mucetti a series of questions related to the monitoring of reclassified students following the school interventions topic and how a parent can learn what type of informal interventions are being offered to students. She asked how reclassified students are monitored, how a deficiency is determined (academic or linguistic) and what tools parents could use in order to find out from these differences if there is no formal information filed in the student's CUM.

Ms. Mucetti explained the SST process and how it is used to document the different support and interventions provided to students at the elementary level.

Ms. Lori Ventura explained in detail the process for identifying students who need additional support or interventions at the secondary level, the different assessments they use to determine who needs extra support and the process for monitoring student progress. If students still need additional support, there are services outside of class such as tutoring, and before and after school classes. The SST also discusses what is best for students.

Mr. Funk added that the reality is that secondary teachers might not do an effective job of informing parents of their EL students' progress due to their caseload of 155 or more students a day compared to elementary teachers, which is only 20 or 30 students per class. It is much easier for secondary students to slip through the cracks. Although the ELIC should be monitoring and teachers should know exactly who their ELs are in the class, it is much easier for them to keep moving forward and not slow down and reach out to those students and their parents. That's why the role of parents is critical and it's important to get involved in high school. There is a lot of parent support in elementary school, then a little less in middle school, but when it comes to high school, students no longer want their parents on campus and teachers are not used to having parents on campus. He reminded parents that if they see their child struggling, they need to demand an opportunity to meet with the ELIC, teacher(s), and assistant principal to make sure support systems are put in place to support that child. This is an area of weakness for secondary schools and they need to do a better job, but it all starts with parents being more proactive in their child's education.

Ms. Herrera asked Mr. Funk how parents can do what he is recommending without having a tangible document or an informational tool that includes an analysis or the reason a particular student has not succeeded and to determine

whether the failure is attributed to the student's academic level or maybe because of his/her frustration, the student did not acquire an appropriate level in English that would have enabled him/her to compete with other students. How do parents know that if there is nothing in the CUM file about an SST or what type of interventions were provided in order to decide whether it is a good idea to reclassify that student or keep him/her as EL since he/she is not being successful and because the English level in 12th grade is below basic. This will cause the student to begin at a basic level when entering a community college. This happens because parents never knew the reason for the student's failure, whether it was academic, linguistic or may because the student has a limitation. She asked what he thinks parents should do and what document parents can use as a tool before having a meeting at the school.

Mr. Funk answered that he doesn't think there is one correct answer for her question. He thinks that secondary teachers have a lot of strategies and have been trained on those strategies, but they are so impacted by time that they don't take the time to look at all the ELs that are struggling and reach out to their parents to explain the situation. This could be because of a lack of understanding the language, the student not applying themselves, the teacher going too fast, etc. There is no document other than the parents' continued support for their high school student as they did in elementary. He reminded parents that they have every right to request a parent conference or a conference with a school administrator to be informed of the progress their child is making in school, to find out what the school is doing to support that child, and to learn what the school perceives the child is not doing in order to be successful. There is no document. It is all about being proactive, meeting with teachers early, and working closely with them and not waiting until it is too late in the year.

Mrs. Rosanna Mucetti concluded her presentation by reviewing the TWBI Program in secondary.

Ms. Mara Herrera requested a motion to extend the meeting 10 minutes in order to give enough time for Mr. McCloskey's presentation.

Mr. José Antonio González made a motion to extend the meeting and Mr. Roberto Rodríguez seconded. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

B. Student Discipline by Mr. Don McCloskey

Mr. McCloskey provided a copy of the Student/Parent/Employee Handbook to parents.

He explained that his presentation would include the procedures to follow when dealing with day-to-day discipline at schools and the procedures to deal with major incidents.

Mr. McCloskey explained that the first thing principals do when there is a discipline issue at the school is get a statement from the person that saw it happen, witnessed it or might have some information about the case. It is expected that an administrator conduct an investigation about what happened.

It is extremely important that administrators know the full story and it is their responsibility to assign a consequence to the student. Students are usually suspended 1 to 5 days depending on how serious the incident is. Once the principal has determined a consequence, he/she must inform parents of the rationale for his/her decision regarding the consequence assigned.

Mr. McCloskey reviewed the procedures for student expulsion. He explained that students who are expelled are transferred to a community school.

The process begins when the school sends expulsion paperwork to the District, where a panel of seven people review and analyze the case and decides whether it reaches the level for expulsion. They never recommend a case for expulsion without having 7 people review the case first. Once the case has been reviewed, it is sent to a different panel, which will make a final recommendation to the Board of Education.

Through the entire process, it is expected that parents be informed of what is happening with the case. If parents are not informed, then his office needs to be contacted. Parents need to be informed of the process and development of the case and must be given the opportunity to be involved.

A parent asked how many expulsions are handled per year.

Mr. McCloskey answered that about 80 per year at the secondary level. He explained that only students at the secondary level are expelled, not in elementary.

A parent asked if parents could inquire about the consequences assigned to the other student who was involved in the incident.

Mr. McCloskey said principals cannot share information about other students, but could let parents know that they have a clear picture of what happened and that all students implicated were given a consequence according to the findings.

A parent recommended giving homework to students when they are suspended.

Mr. McCloskey said that students who are suspended do not get homework, but parents can give them homework when they are home too.

Ms. Ramírez addressed a concern with Mr. McCloskey. She said that schools are not giving notification to parents in their own language. Many times parents don't know what they are getting and it is a violation of their rights as parents. When parents enrolled their students, they requested that the documents be sent in Spanish. But the District does not always send correspondence in both languages. Sometimes parents receive correspondence and they don't understand it. There are instances when students are going through the expulsion process, but parents won't know if the expulsion process is followed accordingly. There are ways parents could file a complaint and appeal. Parents have the right to know what is happening with their children at school. Also, students should be given support and not just transfer them to a school where they will get worse.

Mr. McCloskey said the District has already sent memos to all schools and provided all forms they use in both languages. Parents can call his office if the problem continues at their school.

A parent asked Mr. McCloskey for his recommendation when something inappropriate happens at school and parents don't have the confidence to speak to someone at the school site.

Mr. McCloskey said it is important that there is a person they trust at school and it does not necessarily need to be the principal. If they do not have someone they trust at their school, they can always call the Parent Education Office.

Ms. Herrera asked about the statements that are written when there is an incident at school and whether parents may read those statements.

Mr. McCloskey said they don't write an actual statement, but parents could request to hear the full story of what happened. If for any reason a parent is not in agreement with the consequence or resolution of the incident, they have the right to appeal. Parents may write a letter to the school principal about what happened, attach it to the suspension and send it to the school.

X. Announcements

A. Parent Education and Involvement by Ms. Elizabeth Bliss

-March 23, 2011- A parent night at Willow Glen HS

-Women's Initiative workshops will be offered from April 19-June 30th

-Drugs and Alcohol Summit-April 12, 2011

B. Meeting Evaluations

Parents completed the meeting evaluations.

XI. Adjournment:

Ms. Lucrecia Alonzo made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Daniela Gutiérrez seconded.

All were in favor and Ms. Mara Herrera adjourned the meeting at 8:18 pm.

Minutes respectfully presented by Veronica C. Lara